

August 3, 2005

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Jim Riddle, NOSB Chairman  
c/o Ms. Francine Torres  
USDA-AMS-TMD-NOP  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Room 4008-S, Mail Stop 0268  
Washington, DC 20250-0200

**Re: Biodiversity provisions, Natural Resources Section of the NOSB Organic  
System Plan Template, Crops Committee agenda August 16, 2005**

Dear Chairman Riddle,

I am writing to express support of the Organic Farming Research Foundation for the Crops Committee's proposed (July 14, 2005) amendments to the Organic System Plan Template. OFRF provided funding to the Wild Farm Alliance for its efforts to educate growers, certifiers and USDA-NRCS personnel about biodiversity management issues.

This is a crucial area for the organic community to take responsibility for living up to its professed ideals. These provisions for Biodiversity Management are a constructive step in moving the Organic System Plan model towards integration of the natural resource goals established by the Organic Foods Production Act.

Including biodiversity conservation as an explicit part of Organic System Plans may facilitate acceptance of these Plans as evidence of compliance with conservation-based farm programs such as the Conservation Security Program.

We believe that the full Board should adopt these proposed amendments. These additions to the template are a good approach to documenting many biodiversity considerations. They are concise but reasonably complete. They can evolve in the future as research illuminates the critical agroecological relationships more precisely.

Thanks for your engagement of this important topic, and for your consideration of our comments.

Organically Yours,

*//Mark//*

Mark Lipson